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## TESTIMONIES AGAINST WAR.

## OF STATESMEN.—No. II.

EDMUND BURKE, probably the greatest political philosopher the world ever produced, was decidedly pacific in his sentiments, and transmitted these views to the school of politicians formed under his influence. Fox, Sheridan, Canning, Brougham, may all be regarded as his pupils in the science of politics; and the history of the British parliament records their frequent and successful exertions to prevent war. England, Europe and the world are deeply indebted to those great minds for nearly a quarter of a century of general peace.

Some of Burke's statements respecting the waste of life in war defy belief, and awaken doubt whether he intended they should be received as sober realities. "It is an incontestible truth," he says, "that there is more havoc made of men in one year by men, than has been made by all the lions, tigers, panthers, ounces, leopards, hyenas, rhinoceroses, elephants, bears and wolves, since the beginning of the world. I think the number of men now upon earth are computed at five hundred millions at the most. Here the slaughter of mankind amounts to upwards of seventy times the number of souls this day on the globe."\*

GEORGE CANNING thus exposes the inefficacy of war: "In the whole history of wars between European powers, whoever heard of a war between two great nations having been ended by obtaining the exact, identical object for which the war was begun? I believe, that, in the whole history of Europe, such an instance cannot be found."†

"However confident," he says on another occasion, "I may be in the justice, and however clear as to the principle of the measure embraced in the message from the throne, it becomes me, as a British minister, in recommending to the House of Commons any step which approaches even to the hazard of war, to use the language of sorrow and regret. I can assure the House, that there is not within its walls any set of men more deeply convinced than his majesty's ministers, nor any individual more intimately persuaded than he who now has the honor of addressing you, of the importance of peace to this country, and to the world. So strongly am I impressed with this opinion, that I assure you there is no question of doubt, no question of present advantage, no question of remote difficulty, which I would not have passed over,

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\* Burke's Works, Vol. I, pp. 38, 39.

† Herald of Peace, Vol. VII, p. 206.

compromised, or adjourned, rather than call on the House to sanction any measure which should appear of a warlike tendency. Britain ought to act the part of an umpire, to assuage the animosities, and restrain the aggressions of contending nations,"\*—a part which she has nobly acted for twenty years, under the guidance of those pacific politicians who sprang from the school of Burke.

A debate three years after in the House of Commons called forth in 1829, an expression of similar views from nearly all the leading statesmen of Great Britain. Sir JAMES MCINTOSH, in opening the debate, said, that "such discussions in representative assemblies will be serviceable, if it were only as affording vents for political animosities, proving the good-will which subsists between the governments constituted on the principle of representation, and rooting more firmly the strong and growing passion for peace, which, I rejoice to say, is visibly extending and increasing throughout every nation in Europe, and which, I would add, is the best legacy left us by the fierce war which raged from Cadiz to Copenhagen. If my passion for peace could have received any addition, it would have been strengthened, when I heard the horrors of war described and deprecated by a man who, during the two thousand years that have elapsed since Scipio vanquished Hannibal, was the only individual that in one battle had destroyed all his enemies. I confess I feel a strong *passion* for peace, for I must call it by that name; and I trust this feeling will ultimately become the ruling passion of all Europe."

Sir ROBERT PEEL, in continuing the debate, remarked, "I will not follow the right honorable gentleman through all the details of his speech; but I will at once express my cordial concurrence with his sentiments respecting the advantages and blessings of peace, and my congratulations for the happiness which fifteen years' entire freedom from war, an unusual circumstance in our later history, has afforded us. I do hope that one great and most beneficial effect of the advance of civilization, the diffusion of knowledge, and the extension of commerce,"—strange that he did not mention Christianity, the very main-spring of all instrumentalities in the cause of peace,—“will be to reduce within their proper dimensions, the fame, the merits, and the reward of military achievements; and that juster notions concerning the moral dignity and the deserts of those who apply themselves to preserve peace, and avoid the eclat of war, will be the consequence.”

BROUGHAM followed Peel, and said on the subject of peace,

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\* *Herald of Peace*, Vol. V, pp. 251, 252 (1826).

"I rejoice to hear it declared to be the duty of the country to preserve peace inviolate. At all times I have prayed for this valuable object; but especially now, when we may be said to be bleeding at every pore from the effects of war, I trust that nothing will be suffered to place that dearest object in hazard. I heartily rejoice to hear, that the ardor for military glory, and the thirst of fame, which has ever been the curse of nations, has been so justly stigmatized to-night."\*

Lord Brougham was still more explicit in 1830. "My principles,—I know not whether they agree with yours; they may be derided, they may be unfashionable; but I hope they are spreading far and wide,—my principles are contained in the words which that great man, Lord Faulkland, used to express in secret, and which I now express in public, *Peace, PEACE, PEACE*. I abominate war as unchristian. I hold it the greatest of human crimes. I deem it to include all others,—violence, blood, rapine, fraud, every thing which can deform the character, alter the nature, and debase the name of man."†

On various occasions, Lord Brougham has expressed similar views. At the meeting of the British Scientific Association, in Edinburgh, 1834, he said, "it has often been remarked, that war is a game at which, were the people wise, governments would not often play; and I may add, that in encouraging and fostering the exertions of men of science, who are of no party, over whom the angry tempests of war pass innocuous, a government is taking the best means to facilitate that which should ever be their chief aim,—*PEACE ON EARTH, AND GOOD WILL AMONG MEN*. As individuals, the older they grow, the more sensible they become that life is too short to be spent in personal quarrels, so I am happy to say, that the world is too old and too experienced for neighboring states to engage in war with little or no ground of quarrel."

Such are the views, not of visionary philanthropists, but of the ablest statesmen that ever lived; sentiments uttered not by way of compliment, but as an homage due to truth; a spontaneous expression of their deliberate and settled convictions respecting the baleful custom of war. Recount their names, and say if the opinions of such men as Clarendon, Burke and Brougham are not worthy of the most serious and respectful consideration.

**MORTALITY AMONG SOLDIERS.**—Since the 54th regiment went to India they have lost thirty-four officers, twelve hundred men, fifty-one European women, and one hundred and thirty-five children (one thousand four hundred and twenty human lives), all from disease, except seventy, who were slain in the field!

\* *Herald of Peace*, Vol. VII, p. 135.

† *Advocate of Peace*, Vol. I, pp. 84, 85.